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Worldwide Propaganda Network Built and Controlled by the C.I.A.

The following article is based on reporting by John M. Crewdson and Joseph B. Treaster. It was written by Mr. Crewdson.

Not long after John Kenneth Galbraith, the Harvard economist, arrived in India in 1961 to take up his new post as Amer-

C.I.A.: Secret Shaper Of Public Opinion Second of a Series.

ican Ambassador, he became aware of a curious political journal called Quest that was floating around the Asian subcontinent.

"It had a level of intellectual and political competence that was sub-zero," Mr. Galbraith recalled in an interview. "It would make you yearn for the political sophistication of The National Enquirer."

Though an English-language publication, "it was only in some approximation to English," he said. "The political damage it did was nothing compared to the literary damage."

Then the new Ambassador discovered that Quest was being published with money from the Central Intelligence Agency. At his direction the C.I.A. closed it down.

Though perhaps less distinguished than most, Quest was one of dozens of English and foreign language publications around the world that have been owned, subsidized or influenced in some way by the C.I.A. over the past three decades.

Although the C.I.A. has employed dozens of American journalists working abroad, a three-month inquiry by a team of reporters and researchers for The New York Times has determined that, with a few notable exceptions, they were not used by the agency to further its worldwide propaganda campaign.

In its persistent efforts to shape world opinion, the C.I.A. has been able to call upon a separate and far more extensive network of newspapers, news services, magazines, publishing houses, broadcasting stations and other entities over which it has at various times had some control.

A decade ago, when the agency's com-

munications empire was at its peak, it embraced more than 800 news and public information organizations and individuals. According to one C.I.A. official, they ranged in importance "from Radio Free Europe to a third-string guy in Quito who could get something in the local paper."

Although the network was known officially as the "Propaganda Assets Inventory," to those inside the C.I.A. it was "Wisner's Wurlitzer." Frank G. Wisner, who is now dead, was the first chief of the agency's covert action staff.

Like the Mighty Wurlitzer

Almost at the push of a button, or so Mr. Wisner liked to think, the "Wurlitzer" became the means for orchestrating, in almost any language anywhere in the world, whatever tune the C.I.A. was in a mood to hear.

Much of the Wurlitzer is now dismantled. Disclosures in 1967 of some of the C.I.A.'s financial ties to academic, cultural and publishing organizations resulted in some cutbacks, and more recent disclosures of the agency's employment of American and foreign journalists have led to a phasing out of relationships with many of the individuals and news organizations overseas.

A smaller network of foreign journalists remains, and some undercover C.I.A. men may still roam the world, disguised as correspondents for obscure trade journals or business newsletters.

The C.I.A.'s propaganda operation was first headed by Tom Braden, who is now a syndicated columnist, and was run for many years by Cord Meyer Jr., a popular campus leader at Yale before he joined the C.I.A.

Mr. Braden said in an interview that he had never really been sure that "there was anybody in charge" of the operation and that "Frank Wisner kind of handled it off the top of his head." Mr. Meyer declined to talk about the operation.

However, several other former C.I.A. officers said that, while the agency was wary of telling its American journalist-agents what to write, it never hesitated to manipulate the output of its foreign-based "assets." Among those were a number of English-language publications read regularly by American correspondents abroad and by reporters and editors in the United States.

Most of the former officers said they had been concerned about but helpless to avoid the potential "blow-back"—the possibility that the C.I.A. propaganda filtered through these assets, some of it purposely misleading or downright false, might be picked up by American reporters overseas and included in their dispatches to their publications at home.

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er than found one of its own. "It is a concern is a going concern," the official said, "it's a better cover. The important thing is to have an editor or someone else who's receptive to your copy."

Postwar Aid for Journals

The C.I.A., which evolved from the Office of Strategic Services of World War II, became involved in the mass communications field in the early postwar years, when agency officials became concerned that influential publications in ravaged Europe might succumb to the temptation of Communist money. Among the organizations subsidized in those early years, a C.I.A. source said, was the prestigious French journal Paris Match.

No one associated with Paris Match in that period could be reached for comment.

Recalling the concerns of those early days, one former C.I.A. man said that there was "hardly a left-wing newspaper in Europe that wasn't financed directly from Moscow." He went on: "We knew when the courier was coming, we knew how much money he was bringing."

One of the C.I.A.'s first major ventures was broadcasting. Although long suspected, it was reported definitively only a few years ago that until 1971 the agency supported both Radio Free Europe, which continues, with private financing, to broadcast to the nations of Eastern Europe, and Radio Liberty, which is beamed at the Soviet Union itself.

The C.I.A.'s participation in those operations was shielded from public view by two front groups, the Free Europe Committee and the American Committee for Liberation, both of which also engaged in a variety of lesser-known propaganda operations.

The American Committee for Liberation financed a Munich-based group, the Institute for the Study of the U.S.S.R., a publishing and research house that, among other things, compiles the widely used reference volume "Who's Who in the U.S.S.R." The Free Europe Committee published the magazine East Europe, distributed in this country as well as abroad, and also operated the Free Europe Press Service.

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